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28United States District Court  
Northern District of CaliforniaUNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
SAN JOSE DIVISIONJOHN DOE,  
Plaintiff,  
v.  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY,  
Defendant.Case No. [5:16-cv-02228-HRL](#)**ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S  
MOTION TO PROCEED UNDER  
PSEUDONYM**

Re: Dkt. No. 3

In this lawsuit, plaintiff John Doe claims that he was falsely accused of rape and wrongly disciplined while he was a student at Stanford University. Given the explicit allegations contained in the complaint, he moves for leave to proceed anonymously, arguing that he reasonably fears ridicule, harassment, as well as retaliation in seeking employment, educational opportunities, and housing.

Ordinarily, pleadings must identify the parties to a suit. Fed. R. Civ. P. 10(a). Nevertheless, “a party may preserve his or her anonymity in judicial proceedings in special circumstances when the party’s need for anonymity outweighs prejudice to the opposing party and the public’s interest in knowing the party’s identity.” Does I through XXIII v. Advanced Textile Corp., 214 F.3d 1058, 1068 (9th Cir. 2000). In evaluating the need for anonymity, the court considers (1) the severity of the threatened harm, (2) the reasonableness of the anonymous party’s fears, (3) the anonymous party’s vulnerability to retaliation; and (4) the prejudice to the opposing

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Northern District of California

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party and whether proceedings may be structured to avoid that prejudice. Id. Additionally, the court “must decide whether the public’s interest in the case would be best served by requiring that the litigants reveal their identities.” Id.

Here, the matters raised by the complaint are of a sufficiently sensitive and personal nature such that the use of a pseudonym is appropriate “to protect a person from harassment, injury, ridicule or personal embarrassment.” Id. Plaintiff’s counsel represents to the court that defendant has no objection to plaintiff’s request to proceed anonymously. The gravamen of the complaint is that defendant allegedly did not treat plaintiff fairly in addressing the rape accusation. Non-disclosure of plaintiff’s identity will not obstruct public scrutiny of the issues in this case.

Plaintiff’s request to proceed anonymously is granted.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: May 5, 2016

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
HOWARD R. LLOYD  
United States Magistrate Judge

1 5:16-cv-02228-HRL Notice has been electronically mailed to:

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3 Rebecca Coll rcoll@quadracoll.com

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